

Attorney Docket No. P14068-US2
Customer Number 27046

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1.) Claim Amendments

The Applicants have amended claims 1, 7-9, 12, 16, 28, 37, 38, 41, and 42; claims 2, 21-27, 32-36, and 45-50 have been canceled; and claims 51 and 52 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-20, 28-31, 37-44, 51, and 52 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph 5 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 12-15 and 28-31 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicants have rewritten claims 12 and 28 in this manner. Claims 13-15 depend from amended claim 12, and claims 29-31 depend from amended claim 28. Therefore, the allowance of claims 12-15 and 28-31 is respectfully requested.

3.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-50 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Osborn (US 6,026,293). However, since the Examiner indicated that claims 12-15 and 28-31 are allowable, the Applicants presume that the § 102 rejection actually applies to claims 1-11, 16-27, and 32-50. The Applicants have amended the claims to better distinguish the claimed invention from Osborn. The Examiner's consideration of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite a method for providing controlled access to a desired function in a system that includes a plurality of functions. The method includes dividing the plurality of functions into a plurality of groups; assigning a different key to each group; receiving an access request from an external entity, said access request including one of the assigned keys; conducting an authentication process for the external entity, using the key received in the access request; and upon positively

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authenticating the external entity, granting the entity access only to the functions in the group corresponding to the key received in the access request, while prohibiting access to functions in other groups.

Thus, the invention provides selective access to certain functions while prohibiting access to other functions. Osborn discloses using a public key cryptography scheme to avoid the problem of storing secret keys or passwords. However, Osborn is not capable of providing access to some functions while denying access to other functions that may have different security requirements. Basis for the amendments to claim 1 are found in the originally filed specification on page 4, paragraph [0009]. Therefore, the allowance of amended claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 3-11, 16-20, and 51 depend from amended claim 1 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. Therefore, the allowance of claims 3-11, 16-20, and 51 is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 37 has been amended to recite an apparatus for providing controlled access to a desired function in a system that includes a plurality of functions. The apparatus includes means for dividing the plurality of functions into a plurality of groups; a memory for storing a plurality of different keys, each key being assigned to a different group of functions; means for receiving an access request from an external entity, the access request including one of the assigned keys; and a processor for conducting an authentication process for the external entity. The authentication process uses the key received in the access request, and upon positively authenticating the external entity, the processor grants the entity access only to the functions in the group corresponding to the key received in the access request, while prohibiting access to functions in other groups.

Thus, once again, the invention provides selective access to certain functions while prohibiting access to other functions. Osborn is not capable of providing access to some functions while denying access to other functions that may have different security requirements. Basis for the amendments to claim 37 are found in the originally filed specification on page 4, paragraph [0009]. Therefore, the allowance of amended claim 37 is respectfully requested.

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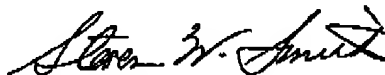
Claims 38-44 and 52 depend from amended claim 37 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 37. Therefore, the allowance of claims 38-44 and 52 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants believe all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for claims 1, 3-20, 28-31, 37-44, 51, and 52.

The Applicants request a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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